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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS RELEASE

Board of Supervisors Approve Contract with Imagine LA for Support Services for Pregnant and Parenting Transition-Aged Foster Youth

(LOS ANGELES, April 28, 2015) – Today, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors granted authority to Philip L. Browning, Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), to enter a contract with Imagine LA for mentorship and support services to pregnant and parenting transition-aged youth (TAY) exiting the Los Angeles County foster care system. The total amount of \$202,000 for this contract is financed from the County's "AB 2994" funds, administered by the Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), that are generated from birth certificate fees. The contract is authorized for a two-year countywide pilot program with an option to renew for an additional year. In addition, the pilot's evaluation will be conducted by the USC School of Social Work and funded by the consortium Southern California Grantmakers (SCG).

Jill Govan Bauman, President and CEO of Imagine LA, says "Imagine LA is thrilled to have the Board of Supervisors, ICAN's and the Southern California Grantmakers' support of this innovative partnership with DCFS. The pilot will utilize Imagine LA's unique Family Mentorship Program to work with foster youth exiting the system who have children or are pregnant – to help them thrive. Studies show:

- Among girls in foster care at age 17, more than 25% had given birth at least once during their teens.^[1]
- Among girls with a first birth before age 18, more than one in three had a second teen birth.¹
- Over 50% of TAY experience homelessness within their first year of emancipation.^[2]
- 44% of the young children of emancipated TAY return to foster care.²

^[1] E. Putnam-Hornstein et al. (2013). California's most vulnerable parents, A population based examination of maltreatment history among adolescent mothers. Los Angeles, CA: Children's Data Network.

^[1] Dennis P. Culhane, PhD et al. (2011). Young Adult Outcomes of Youth Exiting Dependent or Delinquent Care In Los Angeles County. Los Angeles, CA: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation funded study.

The pilot project will serve TAY families leaving Extended Foster Care (EFC) to participate in Imagine LA's innovative two-year Family Mentoring Program. The EFC allows TAY to remain under foster care until the age of 21. The goal of this program is to help these young, extremely vulnerable families build relationship skills and connections that empower them to stay together, stay housed, thrive and break the cycle of abuse and neglect.

"I look forward to entering this contract with Imagine LA. I believe their services will greatly help put our young parents and their children on the path to success," says DCFS Director Philip L. Browning.

The Family Mentorship Program creates a professionally-guided and volunteer-infused support system around each family, giving them the foundation they need to succeed. Imagine LA's professional staff train and guide a volunteer mentor team and their matched family through a structured, step-by-step, two year program. Volunteer mentor teams come from nearby organizations (e.g., companies, faith communities and schools) or a group of individuals. An Imagine LA Family Team Manager helps 1) the families clarify their goals and access resources, and 2) trains and guides the mentor teams in providing weekly one-on-one mentoring to each family member to help them achieve their goals. They focus on critical life skills, including: accessing benefits and other health, legal, and social services; tutoring; job readiness training and job placement services; budgeting and financial literacy; education; communication; stress management; crisis response; positive parenting; childcare; and nutrition.

Since launching their first Family Mentorship Team in 2008, Imagine LA has worked with 61 families and demonstrated the lasting impact of its mentorship model. Consistently, by program graduation:

- 100% of families maintained their housing
- 100% of children achieved ASQ (under 5 year developmental standards) or grade level school proficiency with the majority excelling
- 100% of high school-aged youth graduated and pursued higher education
- 100% of participants (adults and children) received annual medical and dental exams
- 75% of families increased their household earned income, on average an increase of 67%

Imagine LA's program has been proven successful for families with similar experiences to those for which the pilot program has been designed. Mary (not her real name), a recent graduate, was homeless at age 18 and had a baby. She says, "My path was not easy, but with my Imagine LA team, I was able to secure a full-time job and buy my own car and my son is blossoming in day care. I'm still discovering who I am, becoming a better parent and I'm so thankful that I have mentors who are willing to take this journey of discovery with me."

"Families who work with Imagine LA get matched with a team of volunteer mentors who walk with them as they change their lives," says Jill Bauman, "This mentorship

team works with their Imagine LA Family Team Manager to make sure all the resources, skills and habits the family needs stick. They are in it for the long haul. The young people in this program will get help with everything from finding and keeping employment, to learning how to budget, cook, parent, and utilize healthcare, to getting a 'mom' break when they need it most. And the children will have other caring resourceful adults also nurturing their development."

According to DCFS manager Harvey Kawasaki, "This is truly an innovative program that continues our investment in former foster youth who are now young adults with children of their own. This unique approach provides trained volunteer family mentors, from all walks of life and with special skills and interests, to educate and support our young parents. The program has the potential to be the ultimate community-based safety net for foster youth as they exit foster care as young adults."

"Young people coming out of the foster system need help, and they need hope," said Deanne Tilton, Executive Director of ICAN. "We believe this pilot program with Imagine LA will give emancipated foster youth and their families the tools to break the cycle of poverty, abuse and neglect. We want these young people to start their independent lives secure in the knowledge that someone cares about them and their children and wants them to succeed. We hope that this pilot project will help us discover a new path for all young families exiting the foster system."

Commissioner Patricia Curry, of the Los Angeles Commissioner for Children and Families, says, "The Imagine LA pilot program is so exciting because it provides us with the opportunity to build on the incredible success Imagine LA has had helping at-risk families and brings their mentoring and support program to a new population of young adults and their children who are transitioning from foster care. I am hopeful that this public/ private partnership and the efforts of so many other organizations will continue to raise awareness of the needs of this truly vulnerable population. We simply cannot ignore the key findings of the USC-led study and report, California's Most Vulnerable Parents: When Maltreated Children have Children, prepared for and funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, that highlighted, among other issues, the multigenerational cycle of abuse and neglect. We must start developing programs that PREVENT these cycles of abuse and neglect. The Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families is proud to be a part of this public and private partnership and thanks the Board of Supervisors for their support."

The Imagine LA/DCFS pilot will also be monitored and evaluated by a third-party team at the USC School of Social Work, led by Associate Professor and Associate Dean Dorian Traube, Ph.D. The evaluation will be funded by a consortium of private funders, who came together through SCG, a growing leadership network dedicated to advancing effective philanthropy where 250+ foundations, corporations, and government grantmakers come together to learn, connect, and take action. Wendy Garen, chair of SCG, says, "Local funders recognize the critical unmet needs of children in the dependency system, and we are very pleased to invest in the evaluation of this important work. We hope that our collective action signals to the entire community the importance of working together to improve outcomes for children."



Success Story

My name is Sarah and I am exceedingly grateful to be where I am today. When I was 7-years-old, I was removed from my family and entered the foster care system. I was raised by my adoptive mother and she and I had a horrible relationship. I was thrown out when I turned 18 and decided to move to Los Angeles. I was really struggling, bouncing around from place to place. I had no friends. I was hanging out with all the wrong people, worst of all, I didn't care about myself.



I wanted it all to end so badly. I desperately wanted out of this life and hoped every day that God would grant my wish. I was dating all the wrong men and fell into a deep depression. My depression led me to turn to drinking for comfort. Alcohol didn't judge me, it was always there for me, it made me feel better, and it loosened me up; however, it also made me blackout to the point where I wouldn't remember anything I had done the night before. I was at an all-time low. I found myself getting involved with a man who said he loved me and I believed him. I ended up getting pregnant and found myself alone. I had nowhere to go. Eventually, I was led to Beyond Shelter, an organization that helped me receive housing. Finally, I was going to have a place for my baby to call home. Beyond Shelter introduced me to Imagine LA. They said it was an awesome mentorship program that helps families transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency. Joining Imagine LA was the greatest decision I've ever made!

Through Imagine LA's program, I not only received incredible support from my mentors, but also prayers and unconditional love. I was given a team who was always willing to give their time and energy to help out with anything from grocery shopping, to budgeting, to inviting me into their community. I had so many responsibilities I did not know what to do or how to navigate, and my team guided me through it all. I went from wanting to end it all to being blessed with the smartest, most handsome little boy I've ever seen. My team helped me find and feel comfortable with putting my son in childcare, as well as helping me through the process of finding doctors and dentists. We had tons of fun! My path was not easy, but with my team, I was able to secure a fulltime job and buy my own car. I'm still discovering who I am and I'm so thankful that I have mentors who are willing to take this journey of discovery with me. I believe that joining Imagine LA was God's way of saying "You're okay now," for that, I am blessed beyond belief.



ABOUT US

MISSION

To empower families to transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency.

HISTORY

Established in 2006, Imagine LA began as an initiative of Bel Air Presbyterian. We launched our pilot Family Mentorship Program with one family and mentor team in 2008. Since then, we have worked with over 61 families — more than 200 individuals — forming dozens of teams with faith communities, companies, and other organizations, all working under the guidance of our professional staff. We also collaborate with nearly 100 community-based partners — government, nonprofit, and private organizations that provide valuable services and resources to our families and their mentors.

2014 FAMILY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Imagine LA worked with 107 mentors to serve 29 families (87 family members — 31 adults and 56 children).

IMPACT

Consistently, by program graduation:

- 100% of families maintained their housing
- 100% of children achieved grade level school proficiency; the majority are excelling
- 100% of high-school aged youth graduated and pursued higher education
- 100% of participants (adults and children) received annual medical and dental exams
- 75% of families increased their household earned income, average increase of 67%

Adults are going from possessing minimal job skills to having viable career paths; kids are going from struggling in school to attending college. Volunteers participating in the mentorship program say this is a truly meaningful and life-changing experience for them as well.

In addition to this remarkable success, Imagine LA's Family Mentorship Program is a cost effective investment. Imagine LA invests approximately \$10,000 per family in program services. This investment can prevent repeat family homelessness, which costs from \$50,000 to \$100,000 per episode, and children entering foster care, which costs more than \$20,000 a year per child.

HOW IMAGINE LA HELPS: FAMILY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Imagine LA's innovative Family Mentorship Program matches every family member, over age 5, with a one-to-one mentor; every family gets a Budget Mentor; other volunteers help with tutoring, child-care, meal-planning and more. Imagine LA's professional staff train and guide the Family Mentor Teams through the Program with three main goals for the family: maintain housing, attain self-sufficiency and ensure every member of the family thrives.

Throughout the one-to-two-year program, an Imagine LA Family Team Manager helps 1) the families clarify their goals and access resources, and 2) guides the volunteer mentor teams in providing weekly one-on-one mentoring to each family member to help them achieve their goals. They focus on critical life skills, including: accessing benefits and other health, legal, and social services; tutoring; job readiness training and placement; budgeting/financial literacy; education; communication; stress management; crisis response; positive parenting; childcare; and nutrition.

FUTURE

As we look to 2015, we are focused on and poised for continued growth. Guided by our Sustainability and Scalability Plan, growth goals include targeted outreach to veteran service agencies for family referrals. Additionally, we are beginning an exciting three-year Pilot Project with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. The Pilot will use our innovative Family Mentorship Program to work with Transition Age Youth leaving Extended Foster Care, which allows foster youth to continue in foster care up to age 21, who have children or are pregnant. Operationally, we plan to move our offices to a more accessible, community-based location.

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ADVISORY COUNCILS

Professional Advisors: Provide or link families to needed specialized services and/or resources

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Community Engagement Council: Encourage community involvement and recruitment of Family Mentor Teams

Rev. Jimmy Bartz – Thad's Church

Rabbi Steven Carr-Reuben – Kehillat Israel

Rev. Steven Huber – All Saints Church Beverly Hills

Rev. Scott Mehl – Cornerstone Church

Cambria Smith Tortorelli – Holy Family Church

Imagine Tomorrow: Alumni Association

Ana Noble and Tiffany Payne – Co-Chairs

CHANGE AGENTS

Ebony Lewis and Danny Mapes - Co-Chairs

EXECUTIVE TEAM

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Kent Wallace-Meggs

Development and Communication Director



PARTNERS

FUNDING PARTNERS

Our Funding Partners are made up of individual donors, private and public foundations, corporations, the government and the faith community.

The Ahmanson Foundation
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The Rose Hills Foundation
Rotary Club of Beverly Hills
S. Mark Taper Foundation
Thomas Safran & Associates
United Way of Greater Los Angeles
The Weingart Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation

RESOURCE PARTNERS

Imagine LA works with families who have recently transitioned out of homelessness. Through the help of donated items and resources, we strive to ensure the families have any additional support they may need.

20th Century Fox
Babytalk LA
Behavior Therapy Clinic
Bel Air Presbyterian Church
Big Sunday
Camp Max Straus
Camp Whittle (YMCA)
Canoga Park Family Source Center (FSC)
Cedars Sinai Medical Center
Chrysalis
Crystal Stairs Inc
Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services
Dress for Success
Drop-In Tutoring
First Five through Beyond Shelter FSC
First Five through House of Ruth
Guadalupe Community Center
Guess? Inc.
JVS Health Works
Law Office of Lisa L Maki
Levitt & Quinn Family Law Center
Looking Ahead
Los Angeles Public Library
Manatt Phelps & Phillips, LLC
Moving Families Forward
Needlepoint Guild of America Hancock Park
Phillips Lerner A Law Corporation
Public Counsel
Shelter Partnership
TOMS
Valley Food Bank
Whole Foods
Zimmer Children's Museum

Please note: Imagine LA is not a religious organization. Proselytizing of any sort is prohibited.

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PARTNERS

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Imagine LA engages faith communities, companies and other committed organizations of all types (“Program Partners”) to sponsor and mentor families through the 1-2 year program.

Current Program Partners

All Saints’ Episcopal Church
Bel Air Presbyterian Church
Cedars Sinai Medical Center
Cornerstone West LA
First Congregational Church of Glendale
Hollywood Seventh Day Adventist Church
Holy Family Catholic Church
Kehillat Israel
Leo Baeck Temple
Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church
Salem Lutheran Church
St. Edmund’s Episcopal Church
St. Michael and All Angels Church
Temple Emanuel
Thad’s
Valley Beth Shalom

Previous Program Partners

20th Century Fox
Beth Shir Shalom
B’Nai David Judea
Congregation Tikvat Jacob
Hollywood Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Islamic Center of Southern California
Lake Avenue Church
Law Office of Lisa L. Maki
Lutheran Church In The Foothills
New Life Christian Church
Phillips Lerner A Law Corporation
Saint Mark United Methodist Church
St. Cross by the Sea Episcopal Church
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
Stephen S. Wise
Temple Ahavat Shalom
Temple Beth Hillel
Temple Kol Tikvah
Temple Valley Beth Shalom
TOMS
West Los Angeles United Methodist Church
Wilshire Blvd. Temple
Zion Temple Community Church

REFERRAL PARTNERS

Imagine LA partners with existing homeless service agencies located throughout Los Angeles County that provide temporary “transitional housing” and other services to homeless families.

A Community of Friends
Alexandria House
Ascencia
Beyond Shelter
Door of Hope
Family Promise
Good Shepherd Center
Harvest Home
Hollywood Community Housing
Homeless Health Care Los Angeles
Koreatown Youth and Community Center
L.A. Family Housing
Los Angeles Mission
Miriam’s House
New Directions for Veterans
Para Los Niños
PATH
South Los Angeles Child Welfare Initiative
St. Joseph Center
Upward Bound House
US Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA)
Westwood Transitional Village/The Salvation Army

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**IMAGINE
A TEAM**

THE IMAGINE LA FAMILY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Imagine LA is dedicated to mobilizing volunteer teams in the community to end the cycle of family homelessness and poverty.

Families are an often-overlooked segment of the homeless population, with their own special challenges. Many bounce in and out of homelessness as parents face difficulty increasing their incomes and saving money. Youth in these families often struggle in school, with fewer than half graduating high school.

THE FAMILY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Our innovative Family Mentorship Program matches each dedicated volunteer team with a Family, working directly with the Family for 1-2 years. The Team and Family walk

together on a journey out of chronic poverty to a place of permanent housing, self-sufficiency, confidence and wellness — where every member of the Family is thriving.

ONE TEAM ONE FAMILY

Imagine LA Families have experienced homelessness. Some are veteran families. They have all been in a shelter or temporary housing and are in the process of moving into their own housing.

Their caseworkers from transitional shelters have referred them to Imagine LA because they are vulnerable to repeat homelessness, and they are open to our mentorship model. Imagine LA then screens and trains each Family to make sure they are appropriate, safe, communicative, eager and ready to be matched with a mentor team.

For families escaping the cycle of poverty, a mentor **like you** can make the difference between surviving and thriving. For formerly homeless families who are just getting their own roof over their heads, the support of a team of mentors might be what takes them from just being housed...to truly being home.

The Family and their Mentor Team work to address three main goals:

- Maintain housing
- Attain self-sufficiency
- Ensure that every Family member thrives



BE THE CHANGE: FORM OR JOIN A MENTORSHIP TEAM

YOUR MENTORSHIP TEAM

Each team consists of 5-10 people. There are many different roles, large and small, depending on a family's size and needs. Most of the roles do not require any prior skills, just lots of

enthusiasm, kindness, an open mind, consistency and a can-do attitude. Imagine LA staff trains and guides your team every step of the way.

The rest of your organization or company can be engaged too. There are numerous occasions the team will reach out to seek specific help or resources for the Family — so even those who aren't mentors will have opportunities to be involved.

EVERYONE BENEFITS

The Family Mentorship Program is a transformative experience for our Families and Mentors alike. Each person has a new perspective and meaningful relationships, feels a sense of

accomplishment, personal growth and the power of team work. Plus, Imagine LA can help your organization:

- Align real action with your goals and mission
- Create measurable impact
- Build leadership and strengthen teams

Your organization as a whole will receive bi-annual updates on the Family's progress, in addition to regular sharing from your Mentor Team along the way.

We ask that your organization makes a donation towards defraying the cost of your Family's Imagine LA journey.

GETTING STARTED

For your first training, you'll need at least three volunteers ready to take on the core roles. But it is important to have an enthusiastic group ready to step up.

What if I can't put together a team?

Traditionally, Family Mentorship Teams have been drawn from individuals who have a company, house of worship, or other affiliation in common. We are now assembling teams from individuals who want to be a part of the change and are ready to join others like them. If you'd like to be placed on a team by Imagine LA staff, please get in touch. We're ready to put you to work. If you have a few people, but not a whole team, Imagine LA is ready to help you recruit the rest of your team.

Imagine LA is a really awesome opportunity to get involved on a personal level. It's all about having a relationship with someone, and it totally changes your concept of how to help someone in need.

—Brianne, Mentor



**THE
MENTORSHIP
JOURNEY**

The Family Mentorship Program lasts 1-2 years, though the relationships often continue on into the future.

We divide the journey into 3 phases. In the first, volunteers get trained, adopt their roles, and engage with the Family once a match is made. The 2nd encompasses the ongoing work as the Team and Family pursue their specific goals. The core roles will last throughout the program, while there may also be a few shorter-term opportunities for some volunteer mentors. After the formal match ends, the 3rd phase begins and the relationship continues.

Of course, every Team and Family's experience is different. There will be surprises along the way. That's why Imagine LA's experienced staff will be with you every step of the way. Join us!

Family Mentorship Program Team Journey

Phase 1 (1-3 months)

1

Build and Train Team
Screen and Train Family
Match Team with Family
**Make a donation towards
your Family's journey**

Phase 2 (1-2 years)

2

**Quarterly Goals and
Milestones**
Regular Contact
Provide Resources
Weekly Conference Calls
Family Fun Events

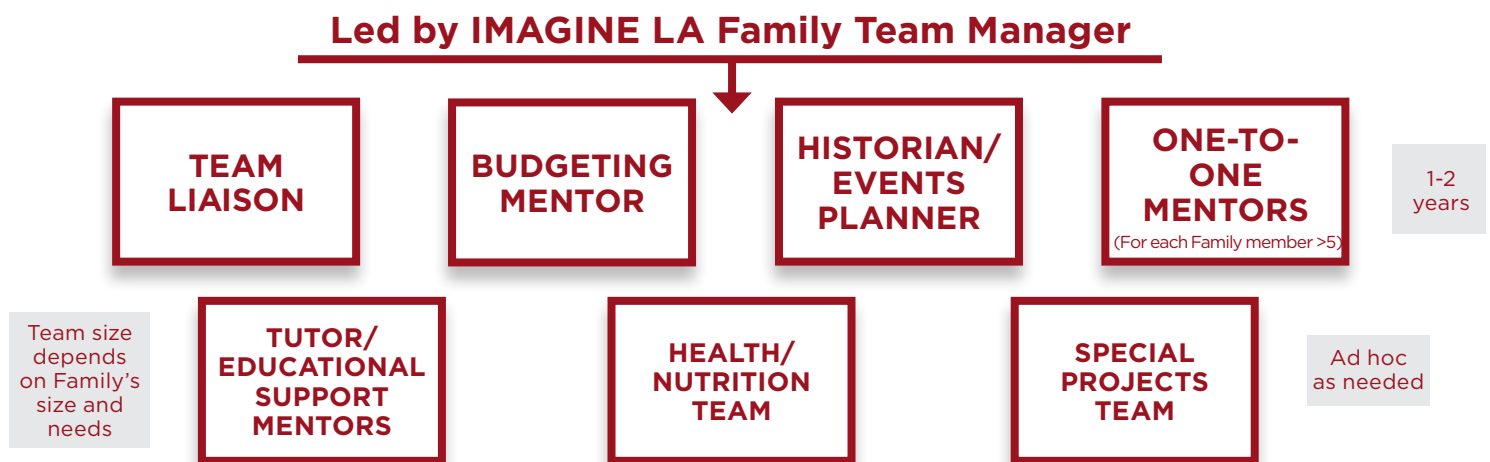
Phase 3 (ongoing)

3

Graduation
Alumni activities
Continued relationship...



Family Mentorship Program Team Structure



MENTOR TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

■ **TEAM LIAISON
(CORE ROLE)**

1-2 year commitment,
minimum 1-2 hours weekly

- Trusted member of the Program Partner Community; well-connected within the organization
- Primary liaison between Imagine LA and the Program Partner
- Responsible for ongoing recruitment of Mentor Team
- Maintain consistent communication with the Family and Imagine LA, and assist in quarterly Family milestone-setting
- Participate in weekly team conference calls
- Participate in quarterly Family/Team face-to-face gatherings

**BUDGETING MENTOR
(CORE ROLE)**

1-2 year commitment, 2-3 hours every other week at first, then once a month

- Support Family in implementing a working budget and savings plan, utilizing Imagine LA's simple budgeting techniques
- Begin credit repair process
- Maintain consistent communication with the Family and Imagine LA
- Participate in weekly Team conference calls
- Participate in quarterly Family/Team face-to-face gatherings
- Comfortable with basic math and budgeting techniques

■ ONE-TO-ONE MENTORS (CORE ROLES)

1-2 year commitment,
1-2 hours weekly

- Traditional nurturing/coaching
- Meet with their Mentee consistently (once a week)
- Promote effective communication and act as a role model of positive leadership and guidance to Mentee, helping them define and achieve goals
- Participate in weekly Team conference calls
- Participate in quarterly Family/ Team face-to-face gatherings

HISTORIAN/ EVENTS PLANNER

1-2 year commitment, as needed

- Document the progress of Family and their relationship with the Mentor Team through photos, video and by acting as scribe on weekly conference calls
- Coordinate meet and greet and quarterly Family/Team face-to-face gatherings
- Excellent interpersonal and organizational skills, with creative tendencies
- Participate in weekly Team conference calls

**TUTOR/EDUCATIONAL
SUPPORT MENTORS**

minimum 3 months, up to
program duration, once a week

- Provide skills training in areas needing improvement
- Meet consistently with Mentee
- Assist Mentee in improving study skills/habits and building confidence
- Participate in weekly Team conference calls on a case-by-case basis

HEALTH/NUTRITION TEAM

minimum 3 months, up to
program duration, as needed

- Assist Family in accessing medical and dental care
- Assist with grocery shopping, meal planning and meal preparation and encourage “family meal time”
- Help the Family find appropriate and enjoyable exercise activities
- Adhering to Family budget

SPECIAL PROJECTS TEAM

short-term, as needed

Examples (not a comprehensive list):

- Move-in Teams
- Transportation Team (on call for rides)
- “Give The Parent A Break” Team (periodic play dates)
- Provide or help in accessing resources (e.g., IEP advocate, career coaching, legal aide, car repair, etc.)

ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST COMPLETE IMAGINE LA TRAINING AND COMPLETE A BACKGROUND CHECK